



## United States Embassy Singapore

Public Affairs Section

**RELEASE**

<http://singapore.usembassy.gov>

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### **VISA WAIVER PRE-TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION PROGRAM (ESTA) MANDATORY FROM 12 JANUARY**

Beginning January 12, 2009, all travelers under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) must obtain authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to initiating travel to the United States. Travelers without an approved travel authorization may be denied boarding, experience delayed processing, or be denied admission at a U.S. port of entry. Eligible visitors should apply for travel authorization via the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) ESTA website at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. DHS does not charge a fee for ESTA authorization.

ESTA is an automated system used to determine the eligibility of visitors to travel to the United States under the VWP. Travelers may apply at any time prior to travel and, once approved, ESTA applications are valid for multiple entries into the United States for up to two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first. To facilitate the authorization process, DHS recommends that ESTA applications be submitted as soon as a traveler begins planning U.S.-bound travel, and not less than 72 hours prior to travel.

ESTA will determine, almost immediately in many cases, if an individual is eligible for VWP travel, and if such travel poses any law enforcement or security risks. In rare cases, an ESTA application may be denied, in which case the traveler will be directed to DHS Travel Redress Inquiry Program (TRIP) website. A traveler may also reapply through ESTA after a period of ten days. If the ESTA application is still not approved, the traveler will be required to apply for a nonimmigrant visa at the U.S. Embassy.

While a third party, such as a relative or travel agent, is permitted to submit an ESTA application on behalf of a VWP traveler, VWP travelers should be aware that unauthorized third parties have established websites that charge travelers for information about ESTA and for submitting ESTA applications on behalf of travelers. Use of a private service to apply for travel authorization via ESTA will not expedite the granting of approval. Additional information about ESTA may be found at <http://www.cbp.gov/esta>. For more information about visa application procedures, please visit <http://singapore.usembassy.gov>.

Singapore is one of 35 nations eligible under the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, which also include Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

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